

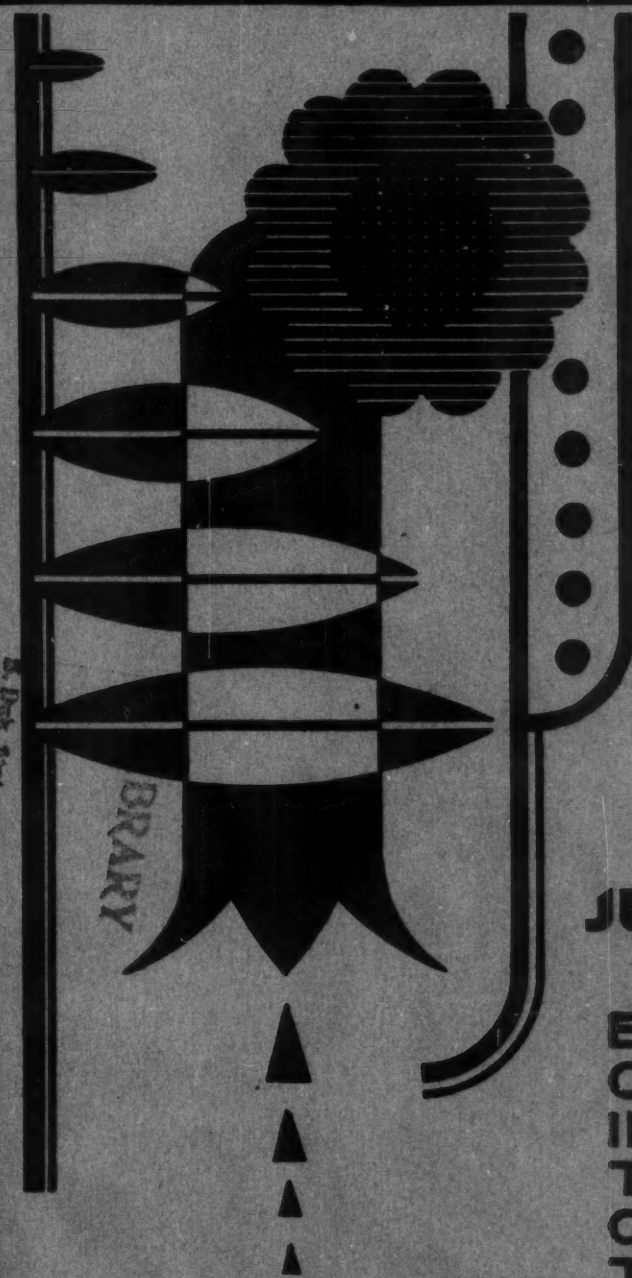
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VOL. 33 NO. 2

DESIGN

DEVOTED TO THE DECORATIVE



JUNE 1931

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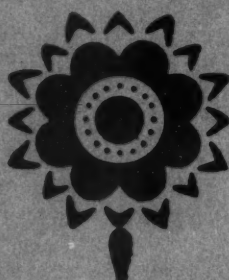
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MAY, 1924 ■ Art of Persia and Design, Heckman; Designing within Limitations, Heckman; Hand-blocked Linens, Heckman; Persian Miniatures, Metropolitan Museum; Ceramics at Chicago Art Institute.

JUNE, 1924 ■ Birds on the Triangle, Stroud; Design Problems for the Beginner, Heckman.

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SEPTEMBER, 1924 ■ Design in the Grades, Couch; Conventionalized Animals, Lawsing; Decorative Landscape in Pen and Ink, Zane; Ica Shawls, Museum of Natural History, New York; Art of Peru, Heckman.

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DECEMBER, 1924 ■ Pottery of Ancient Peru, Robineau; Christmas Greeting Cards, Stroud; Christmas Cards designed by Viennese Children, under Prof. Cizek; Seashore Themes, Zane; Historic Design Motifs, Porter; Nasca Pottery, Museum of Natural History, New York.

JANUARY, 1925 ■ The Linoleum Cut in a University, Rhodes; Newer Theatre and the Artist, Claney; Dance Costume Designing, Robineau; Wood-block Printing for Textiles, Stroud.

FEBRUARY, 1925 ■ Familiar Sayings in Decorative Style, Stroud; Four Bags in Batik, Tardy; Simple Jewelry Making, Atherton; Threshold Pottery.

MARCH, 1925 ■ Textile Designs of Paris, Johnson; Screen Panels, Stroud; Exercises in a Square, Donly.

APRIL, 1925 ■ Simple Jewelry, Atherton; Wood-block Printing, Stroud; Japanese Pottery, Robineau.

NOVEMBER, 1925 ■ Stage Setting Designs, Zane; Animal Frieze, Arnold; Decorative Use of the Human Figure, Payant; A Lesson and Laughter, Coster.

DECEMBER, 1926 ■ Creative Design, Rowe; History of Ornament and Advanced Design, Kahle; Decorative Units in Definite Areas, Robineau.

DESIGN

Vol. XXXIII, No. 2

JUNE, 1931

MODERN ART

BY EDWARD W. RANNELLS

A timely article written by Prof. Rannells and reprinted here from **LETTERS**, a quarterly magazine published by the University of Kentucky

■ If a man love his wife and live with her for years in contentment and solicitude, that may be very commendable in the sight of God but it isn't news. Let him rise up one day and choke her to death then he will surely have his name in the papers. We have heard much of modern art because it is news. But is our conception of it based on what the papers tell us? Knowing news values as we do, we have better judgment than that. We can not assume that all the art called modern will be ugly and violent just because some such shock of difference is needed to get it in print.

Much that we call modern is already old. Cubism, for example, had its day over fifteen years ago. It hardly exists as a separate phase of painting any more, except in the art of Braque. It served a purpose in focusing attention for a time on the real means at a painter's disposal when he sets about the task of bringing visual ideas into some effective pictorial order. Cubism reasserted the fact that the means have always been patterns, directions, planes of light, planes of color; it emphasized the fact that painting is essentially something done on a flat surface, whatever the subject portrayed.

But to those of us who thought of pictures in a sort of literary way, as a means of telling stories or describing pretty ladies, these prismatic effects called Cubism meant little or nothing as art. Their arrogant assumptions of truth offended our taste. We rose up in wrath. The ensuing wrangle was excellent news. Eventually, after much re-examination of premises, we came to see that the Cubists were right in insisting that painting is not literature but something to be judged on its own merits as an art. Having jolted us out of our complacency and cleared the air of much prejudice, Cubism passed into history.

Numerous other "isms" have intervened and many other wordy battles waged since then, but modern art still means hard angles, willful distortions, and crude colors to a great many of us. Such ideas about it are superficial, of course, but one doesn't find it so necessary to keep up to date in these matters as in those of every day concern to us, like the prices to be paid for meat and eggs. We lag behind the

times in art. "The isms of yesterday are the wasms of today". Modern art is contemporary art, a thing of constant change, a restatement of much that is old in terms that are new, a reflection of the rhythms, the energy and drive, the spirit and temper, of our own day.

It will be remembered that George Ade built himself a country place, not to live in necessarily, but to refer to. Such is the measure of our devotion to art! We invoke the charm of a beautiful dead past in our regard for the chairs our grandmothers sat upon and the pictures they looked at then, but we can never go back to that golden day. Why should we walk always in the safe familiar paths of art and never venture out of their shelter, when all the rest of modern life has so much of adventure in it? Modern art is here. It is alive. There is no need to bring it out of the pages of history to live again. It is something to be experienced now with all the zest that belongs to modern life. We don't read by candlelight any more, neither do we ride in carriages. We find the telephone a most convenient device. Once we install an electric refrigerator it seems almost indispensable, and ovens regulated by thermostats make us still more free. Modern art is part and parcel of all this. Why should we wonder at it? It is as authentic, as much of our day, as movies, motor cars and short story magazines. If it lacks the qualities we think that art should have, whose fault is that but ours? Standards in these matters are high in proportion to the number of those who know what to look for and insist upon it. Artists there are in plenty, and they are skilled as never before. There is no limit to what they can do when there is the incentive and driving force of a discriminating and exacting public. An intelligent and responsive audience is a necessary part of every really good play. An informed and sometimes sympathetic public is just as necessary to the quality of modern art.

But quality is too genteel for headlines. It is not for the man who runs. Quality must be sought. Beauty is revealed to the seeker who knows how precious beauty is and has time for the contemplation of it.

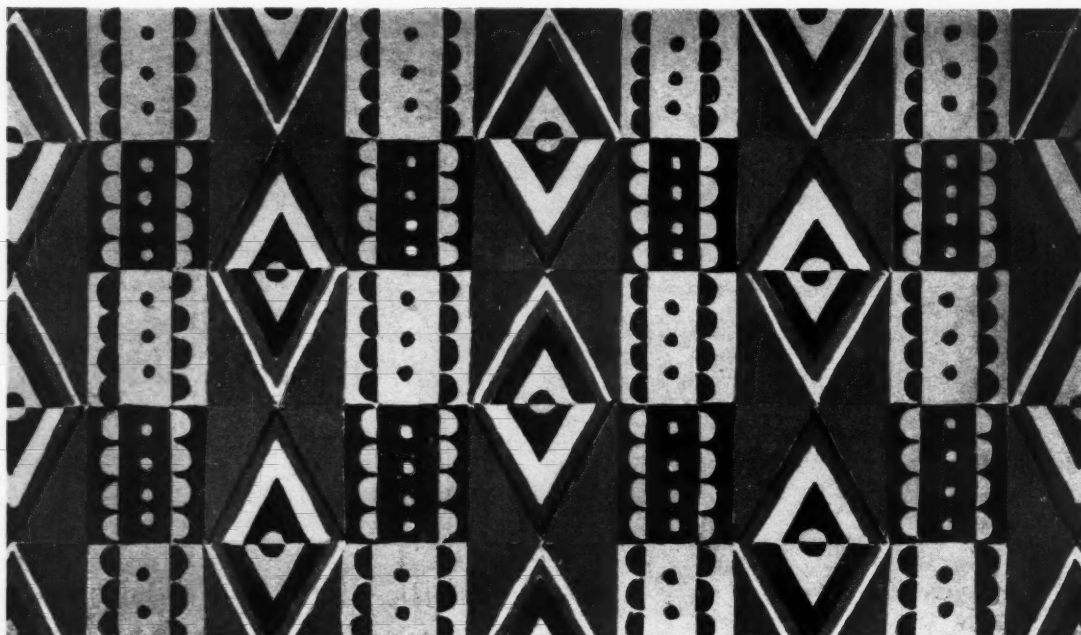
When biscuits are in the oven and the telephone is apt to ring at any moment one is in no mood to sense the sheer beauty of,

"Out of the cradle endlessly rocking,

Out of the mocking bird's throat, the musical shuttle."

So it is with pictorial art. Beauty is in the experience, not the thing. Much of the beauty a picture has is in the mood we bring to it. Much of the meaning a picture has is in the understanding we bring to it. Modern art, not having been sifted and labelled and neatly filed away for us by history, yet requires so much more of us in the way of conscious observation and imaginative insight. We sit and let ourselves be amused in the movies, contributing

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■ ■ ■
A pleasing textile design done in the modern mood by a pupil of Miss Moore

DESIGN FOR HIGH SCHOOLS

BY HAZEL MOORE

■ Creative design is a feeling driven by inspiration and a certain amount of knowledge of laws to form that inspiration. Everyone has in his possession these laws of harmony, balance, and rhythm. Even in the children it is easily awakened or taught—but real creative genius comes only through deep feeling and great understanding. We express ourselves and only if the artist is inspired will the result be inspiring to others. Perhaps this explains why so many primitive designs are so powerful in their appeal. These primitive people lived and felt deeply. Many of their fears as well as their joys were simple but consuming, and it was bound to express itself in their art. In this ornament of the past we find a never ending source of inspiration.

Today the evolution and expression of art into new and startling forms, influenced by the age in which we are living, and the mechanical forms that surround us is expressed so remarkably by artists of extraordinary ability. These designs are dominating and inspiring, but the average high school pupil has not had the experience, the depth of feeling, or fire of genius, that goes into the making of these powerful designs.

The great difficulty the teacher has working with beginning students is to stir the originality lying dormant in the individual, and which is so vital to creative design; to find his style and to help him express himself with true freedom, perhaps by an effort at first, for it is only through this effort and experience that a gradual unfolding and realization of skill and creative power is recognized on the students part. In any high school art department there is not sufficient time to fully develop any one type of art. Where we have pupils who are taking

The designs reproduced with this article are the work of the pupils of Miss Hazel Moore of West High School of Minneapolis and show a remarkable creative spirit and joy in the making as well as a thorough understanding of the underlying principles of design

Amusing and rhythmic is this large design for cretonne done at West High School



Charming and novel is this all-over design done in the manner of modern decorative fabric. The method to develop this pattern is interestingly described in this article

art simply because it touches something fine within them, that needs and finds expression in the art room—to those who will carry it on as a life work, specializing in one of its many fields, the only thing we can hope to do in all the problems is to give the student a certain amount of equipment through a variety of media, stimuli, appreciation and principles which he can use as a foundation to suit his particular purpose and will develop when he finally chooses his particular line.

So in design as in other problems we must find the quickest, most effective way of stimulating and awakening spontaneous creation in this enthusiastic amateur artist of limited or small expression and some tool with which to form his inspiration.

Jean Corot, the eminent French painter of feathery trees and dancing nymphs, once said, "never to paint a picture unless it calls instantly and distinctly upon your eye and heart." Best-Maugard gives us a child's definition of an inspired idea in the words, "I think and then I draw a line around that think." This may be the way of expressing design

and composition, but there is a step before this. One must first have the inspiration or stimulus to their imagination, direct or indirect, every idea or thought has first been suggested by something that has gone before, though we have long since forgotten the source or power that has moved us.

With the students, their suggestion or stimulus must be given directly and at once. Working with the abstract without incentive and just hoping that perhaps a design will develop is unsatisfactory and demoralizing. The student will often lose hours of valuable time, become restless through his uncertainty. He is alarmed by his vacancy and discouraged with the erratic, formless shapes suggestive of jumbled toy puzzle pieces which are unimaginative and uninspired. Giving him the most direct approach possible as a stimulus with a wide chance for adventure and freedom of expression, allowing the personal element to function for the result, will be worth little without the individual's personality in it. Give the thought to him early and often, that his results will be just what he makes them; that his work expresses him and will never rise above him; that self development comes only through self effort.

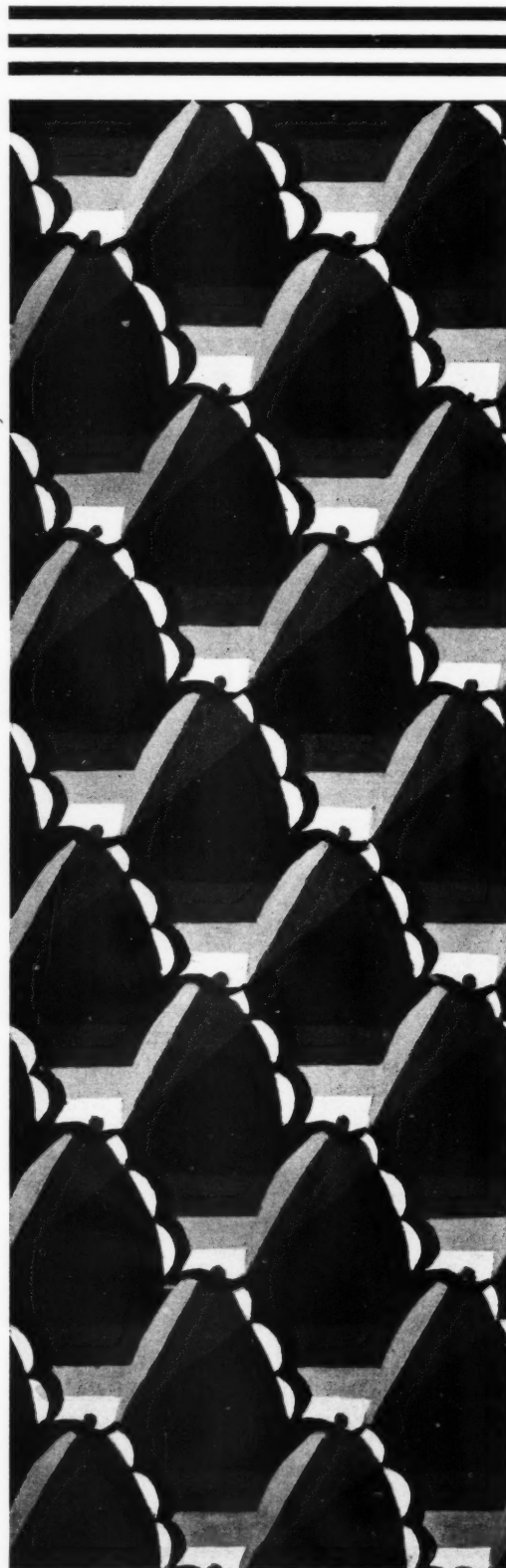
At the beginning of a design problem we invariably turn to one of four methods of expression: (a) The traditional—taking ideas from the ancient and primitive opinions and forms, assembling the ideas and characteristics of a race of people, obeying their rules, and collecting data from their doctrines to help build up our design ideas as from the Egyptians who have so perfectly transmitted their art to us. (b) To nature—using its various forms for inspiration, expressing the idea realistically using nature's irregular shapes simplified, perhaps, but without much regard to spacing, or by retaining the chief characteristics but conventionalizing the whole symmetrically. Closely associated with this is (c) realism—using as a suggestion any object or form and developing literally, simplifying and exaggerating, being careful not to lose the correct line and form. Individual expression and entire freedom is allowed through the fourth which is (d) the creative, also expressed as abstract and best represented by children in bold free brush work. The constant aim is to broaden the students' background, to enlarge his store house of knowledge and not limit him to any one method of approach. With each term of work as the student advances a new method of stimulus is given.

With an ambitious group of sophomores, I have just tried a method of inspiration to design with rather gay, humorous and altogether charming results. The class as a group adopted a humorous play attitude.

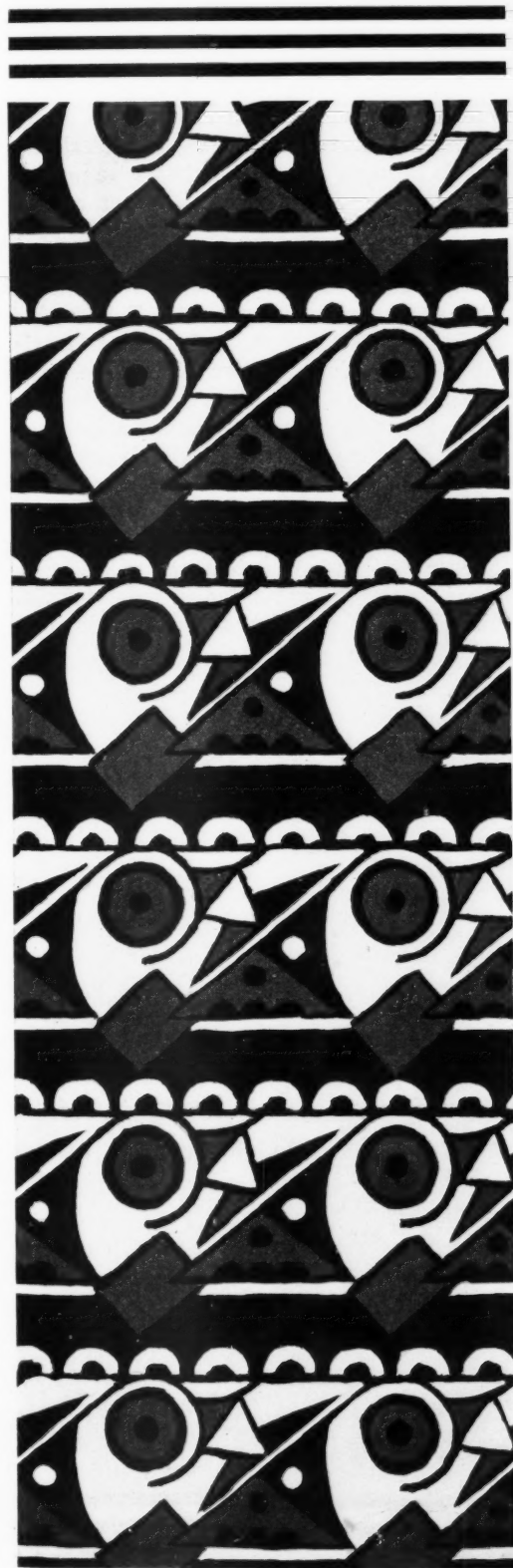
The method of approach was simple and direct. The class was given a large sheet of bogus paper and a piece of charcoal and asked to stand at their desks for more freedom of lines. They drew a few diagonal lines across the page with a short line at intervals for accent or counter action. A sweeping curve connected these two points and a straight line above each represented the backbone of a figure. The whole

suggesting a figure rapidly walking across the page with legs far apart. This was done very rapidly without measuring and with arm swinging freely. Next the class was asked to close its eyes and visualize a toy soldier prancing across the page in exaggerated action using these

The rhythm of line and of values in this surface pattern make a most striking effect for a printed textile



three lines as a skeleton and to visualize their inspiration into a clear mental picture before drawing. For only a second was there a look of blankness. Almost at once came the inspiration and an expression of satisfaction on their faces.



Further suggestions were quite unnecessary because the inspiration had come and a play spirit with it, an excellent combination. Their ideas came tumbling one on the other after this in an endless variety of characters in humorous attitudes and attire. Left to themselves for a time they were later asked to put up their work for class criticism. The class gathered around and was asked to look for individuality of idea, appeal, and simplicity of its expression. The students did the selecting, judging with few suggestions from the teacher. This method was repeated until each student was satisfied as to his subject to be worked out. This is an excellent method in training the individual to help and think for himself.

In the room was a group of advanced students working and they too entered into the problem with much of the same enthusiasm as the class.

In the next step the students were asked to work out a color plan using colored crayons and expressing themselves as boldly and unrestrained as they wished, following no rules. No doubt there are many excellent rules and formulas for color with good reasons for them, but only interesting and unusual combinations can come from free expression. The only rule given was that they were to use a combination of color.

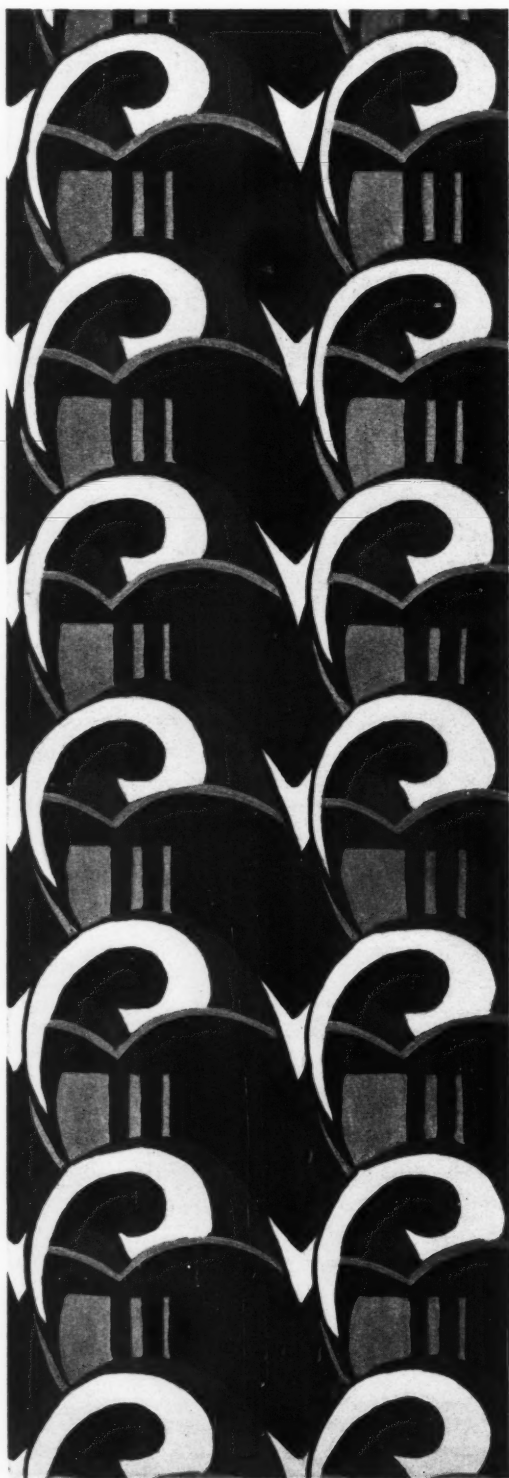
However, a color lesson had already preceded this one in design where colors had been discussed extensively and learning something of color terms, of intensity, values, gradation and their uses. Tempera paint was the medium used for the final result.

A method which I have used several times with beginning pupils, giving great opportunity for self expression and has the power to stimulate the group into immediate action bringing from each individual original forms and unusual combinations, is founded on the seven simple motifs or forms used to a certain extent in all early design, Egyptian, Assyrian, Persian, Chinese, African, and Indian, assembled by Adolfo Best-Maugard; the spiral, simple circle, half circle, connected two half circles, wavy line, broken zigzag, and the simple straight line, the last three being used in a horizontal, vertical, and diagonal direction.

After a short introductory talk, the class was encouraged to experiment with these, to exaggerate by flattening or heightening, by combining and elaborating. The final result to be a surface pattern, completed with tempera paint in four values, black, white, a low dark, and high light. Whether the design is to be static or dynamic in nature is up to the individual. The student works entirely alone at first expressing his ideas in charcoal values. The masses being developed at once to eliminate fussiness, keeping in mind one spot as center of interest with variety in sizes, and contrasts in shapes and forms. The unit that has the most possibilities is chosen, but is no longer to be thought of as a separate unit. Construction of the whole begins with the repetition and fitting together of this unit using the arrangement that will best hold the entire design together. The background spaces which are formed by the joining of the

This rhythmic design shows a clear understanding on the part of the pupil and is a most effective pattern in three values beautifully planned

The striking combination of curved motifs and the strong vertical stripes prove to be a most satisfactory juxtaposition of movements in this design



units are not to be left, giving the effect of endless space or a curtain hung back of the whole. This space must in some way be made a part of the whole, perhaps by bringing the design out into it. There must be a reason for all lines and shapes, avoid any that form little islands floating disconnectedly and without meaning.

The design must be organized and have continuity of movement. If the force is broken the line of movement must be picked up and continued further on. The eye must be led through all its forms with a horizontal, vertical, or diagonal movement and progression with certain depots or centers of interest spots, accented and exaggerated by grouping and contrast in light and dark values, or by color. The natural feeling for order and rhythm will enable the student to unconsciously follow many laws in forming his design into a balanced composition.

A steadily increasing knowledge of basic principles, aesthetic expression and ability of the students to help themselves is found in a design problem given to a group of third year students. The same general plan of development was followed in this problem as in those that have preceded it, i. e., the placing of the forms merely for spotting; the addition of lines for movement, growth, and rhythm; the awakening and development of student personality or style in free aesthetic expression in color and tone, as well as line and pattern; the judging, suggesting, and expression of opinions by the individuals of the group on the class work. This method of criticism reveals new possibilities in the design, and develops in the student the power to help himself in solving his own difficulties. The final step is the perfection and completion of all parts to a harmonious whole. The class as a group was given the same diagram, composed of a large and small circle and a oblong or elongated triangle all joined by a dynamic line suggesting both growth and rhythm. The circle was given, merely because some form was necessary with which to start. Using these structural lines as a foundation, a surface pattern was to be worked out, the final result to be in color and the medium tempera paint. Considering these forms as a flower, bud and stems, united in movement, all parts related and the large circle the starting point with its development the origin of all other parts.

To make pupils create joyfully and sincerely within the range of their own experience and sensibilities is the aim of teachers of design. This is well explained in the article above

MODERN ART
Continued from Page 25

nothing. But the meaning of modern art will never reveal itself while we remain as passive as that. It requires some active participation, imaginatively if not actually, to be fully appreciated and enjoyed. It is not for nothing that John Sloan was recently moved to say that "playing by ear" went out of fashion long before "painting by eye and thinking by hand" did, but that happily now the modern movement has re-introduced some of the long neglected mental concepts into pictures again.

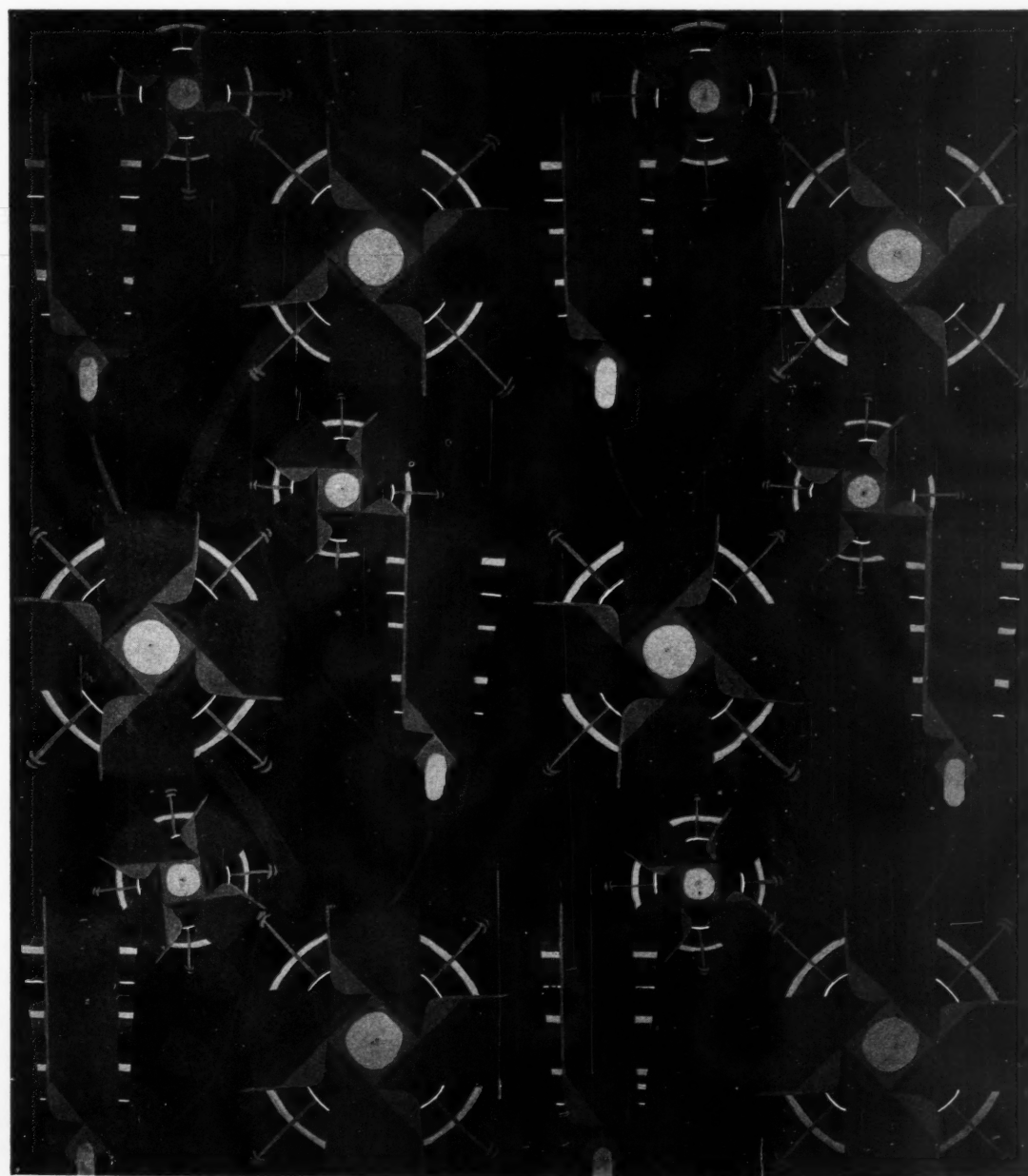
I suspect that the real significance of modern art is not to be found in pictures. Pictures are so very personal and there is no reason to suppose that the sum of personalities will give us the measure of modern art. Pictures are the measure of individuals, for a man inevitably paints himself in every canvas whatever the subject may be. Hence there is occasion for much delightful talk that seldom gets at the heart of the matter, especially now that psychology enables us to tell what happens to the artist in the act of creating his picture and then what happens to the spectator

in the presence of it afterwards so that we are relieved of the necessity of having to deal with the merits of the work itself—in fact, we need not commit ourselves about the art of it at all. This sort of gossip may sometimes be news but it isn't criticism and hardly touches the meaning of modern art.

The art of a period is bigger than any individual artist in it. We live in an age impersonalized by statistics, mechanisms and speed. And it is precisely in the impersonal arts of design rather than in the expression of individuals in easel pictures that the real meaning and the broader implications of contemporary art are to be found.

Pictures are, in a sense, luxuries, even though it is quite possible to have the best of modern wood-cuts or lithographs for little more than the cost of a pair of shoes. But the walls a picture must hang upon and the rugs and curtains and lamps and chairs which keep it company are necessities, and no less art because of that. The woven coverlets and rush-bottom chairs still being made in the Kentucky main-tains are among the finest expression of traditional art in

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An abstract flower
design done by a
pupil of Miss Moore

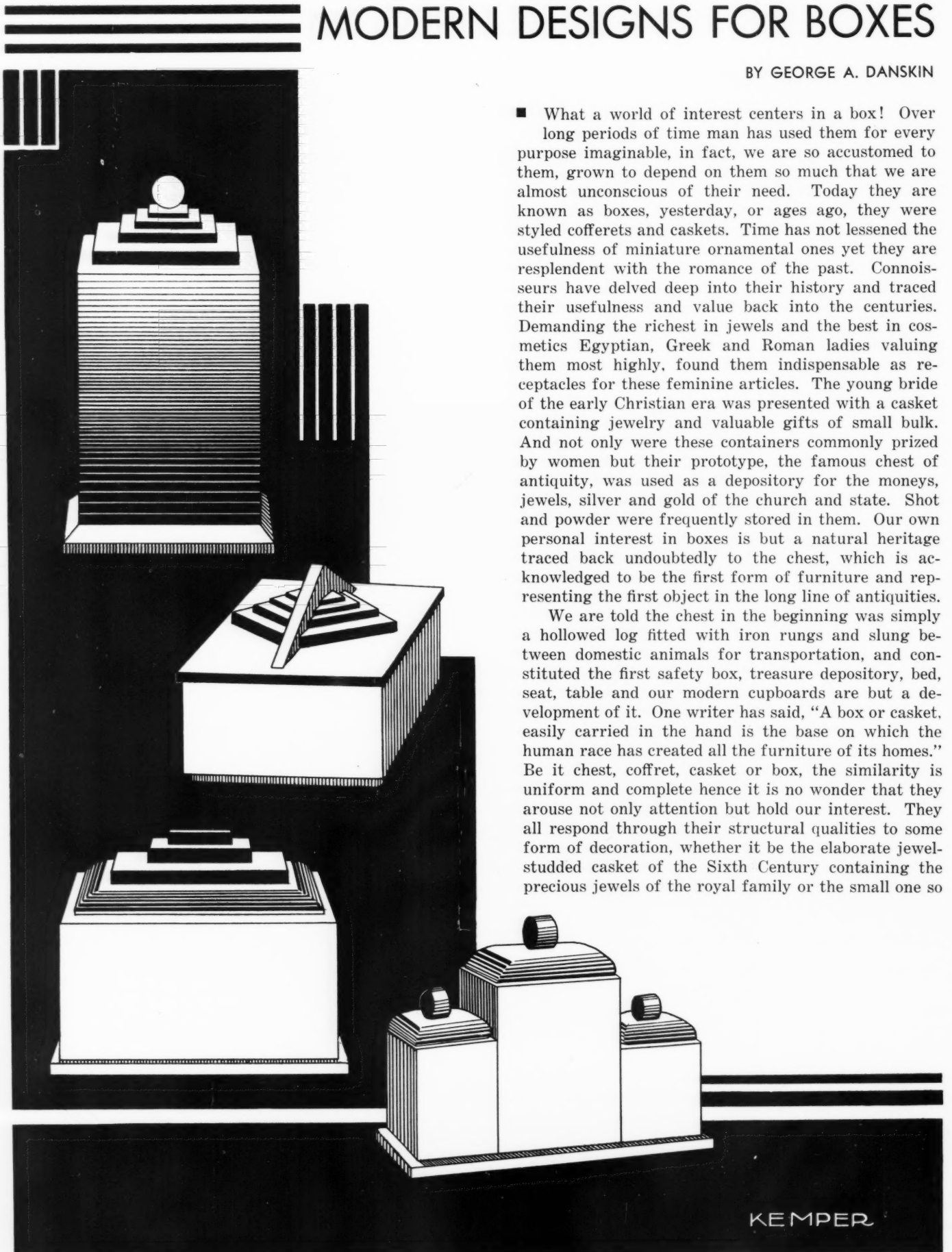


MODERN DESIGNS FOR BOXES

BY GEORGE A. DANSKIN

■ What a world of interest centers in a box! Over long periods of time man has used them for every purpose imaginable, in fact, we are so accustomed to them, grown to depend on them so much that we are almost unconscious of their need. Today they are known as boxes, yesterday, or ages ago, they were styled cofferets and caskets. Time has not lessened the usefulness of miniature ornamental ones yet they are resplendent with the romance of the past. Connoisseurs have delved deep into their history and traced their usefulness and value back into the centuries. Demanding the richest in jewels and the best in cosmetics Egyptian, Greek and Roman ladies valuing them most highly, found them indispensable as receptacles for these feminine articles. The young bride of the early Christian era was presented with a casket containing jewelry and valuable gifts of small bulk. And not only were these containers commonly prized by women but their prototype, the famous chest of antiquity, was used as a depository for the moneys, jewels, silver and gold of the church and state. Shot and powder were frequently stored in them. Our own personal interest in boxes is but a natural heritage traced back undoubtedly to the chest, which is acknowledged to be the first form of furniture and representing the first object in the long line of antiquities.

We are told the chest in the beginning was simply a hollowed log fitted with iron rungs and slung between domestic animals for transportation, and constituted the first safety box, treasure depository, bed, seat, table and our modern cupboards are but a development of it. One writer has said, "A box or casket, easily carried in the hand is the base on which the human race has created all the furniture of its homes." Be it chest, coffret, casket or box, the similarity is uniform and complete hence it is no wonder that they arouse not only attention but hold our interest. They all respond through their structural qualities to some form of decoration, whether it be the elaborate jewel-studded casket of the Sixth Century containing the precious jewels of the royal family or the small one so



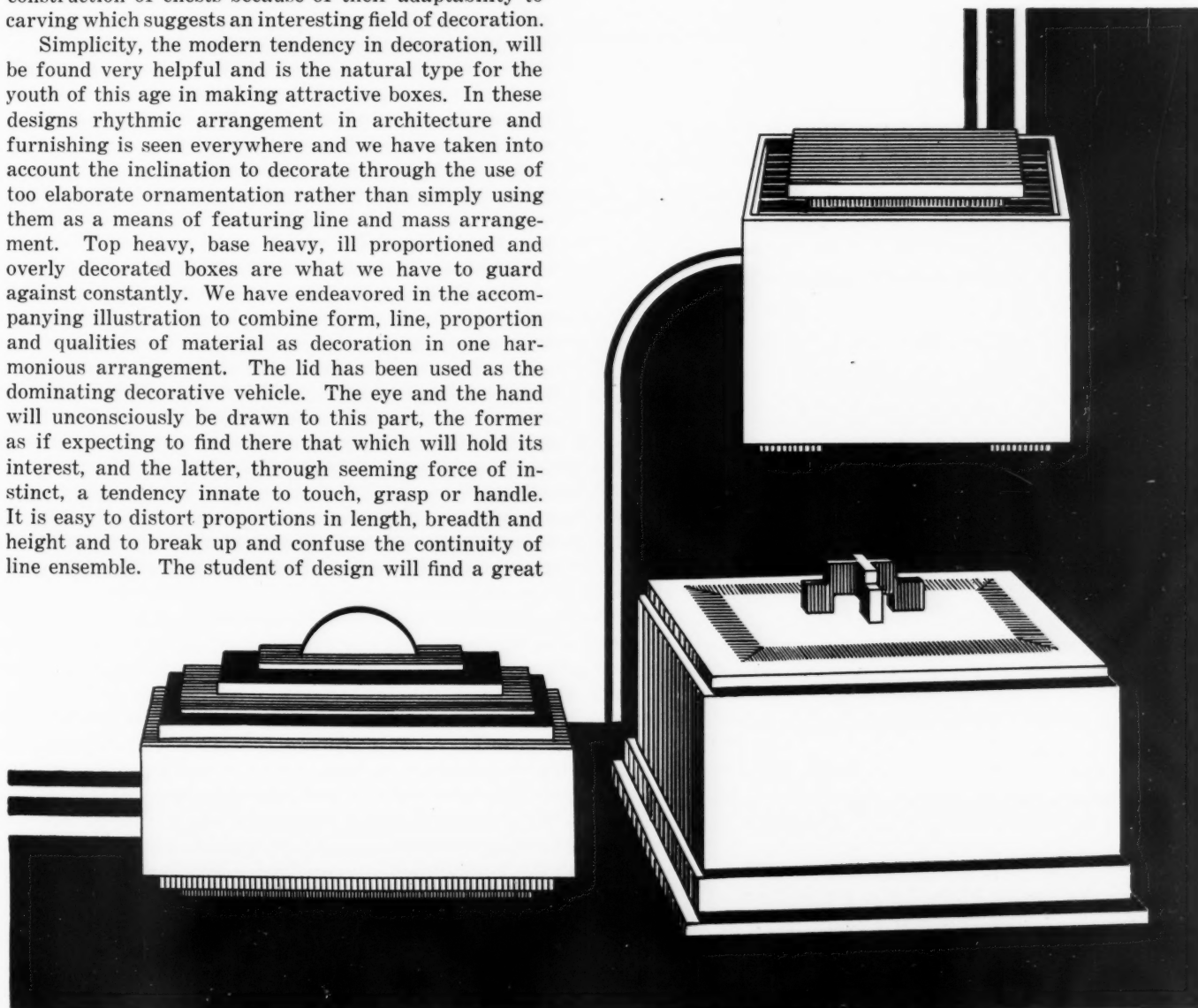
necessary in our homes, and which use has made it beautifully simple in line and proportion.

It may be a far cry from the casket or coffret of three thousand years ago, to the box projects made in our modern school workshop, but no problem of worth can so turn back the pages of history and prove more interesting or rich in ancient cultural value and appreciation. Aside from the sentiment associated with it, few shop activities bring more interest or enthusiasm. In sizes and shapes there is no limit to the possibilities and nothing one can present affords a more interesting field for design in the modern manner. As a problem for the development of mechanical skill it has no equal. A large variety of joints can be used for fastening them together while the lid may be merely a cover, to lift off and on, hinged, or a dowel used for a pivot hinge similar to the one used in the earliest forms of chests. The fact is that just as much experience, understanding and skill results from making a box of fine construction as from making large pieces of furniture. The cost of material, which must be considered in most schools, is a small factor and for that reason the choicer woods can well be used. The Egyptians used ebony and acacia; the Italians and Spanish used walnut; oak and pear have contributed largely in the construction of chests because of their adaptability to carving which suggests an interesting field of decoration.

Simplicity, the modern tendency in decoration, will be found very helpful and is the natural type for the youth of this age in making attractive boxes. In these designs rhythmic arrangement in architecture and furnishing is seen everywhere and we have taken into account the inclination to decorate through the use of too elaborate ornamentation rather than simply using them as a means of featuring line and mass arrangement. Top heavy, base heavy, ill proportioned and overly decorated boxes are what we have to guard against constantly. We have endeavored in the accompanying illustration to combine form, line, proportion and qualities of material as decoration in one harmonious arrangement. The lid has been used as the dominating decorative vehicle. The eye and the hand will unconsciously be drawn to this part, the former as if expecting to find there that which will hold its interest, and the latter, through seeming force of instinct, a tendency innate to touch, grasp or handle. It is easy to distort proportions in length, breadth and height and to break up and confuse the continuity of line ensemble. The student of design will find a great

deal of interest in determining what a well designed object of this type represents. There is so much that is surprising, unusual and pleasing to arouse one's enthusiasm in it all. Red gum and mahogany have been used with a simple touch of walnut in the plain inlay on two of the lids. In our construction the butt and rabbet joint has been used entirely. Only one of the boxes has a hinged lid, all the others having removable tops. Linseed oil was applied to the natural wood and allowed to dry after which they received two coats of thin shellac. This was rubbed down with No. 0 steel wool, two more coats applied, again rubbed down and a coat of furniture polish given. This affords a pleasing dull gloss finish and brings out the natural beauty of the wood, greatly to be desired.

These boxes illustrated with this article were made in the Industrial Arts classes of South High School of Columbus, Ohio, under the direction of Mr. Danskin and show a real understanding and appreciation of the design of our time



A MURAL DECORATION



CREATIVE DESIGN

BY CARL ZIMMERMAN

The very new and modern designs accompanying this article are the work of students of the Cincinnati Art Academy in the class of Mr. Zimmerman

■ Design—the proportion, spacing, shaping, appropriateness of any creative effort is the first element of Art. It is the structure of the thing said whether in painting, music, architecture or any other art. No other study is so necessary or contributes so much to a successful art education as Design. Yet no other element is quite so difficult to teach. One might say that it is the creative impulse itself, that it marks the distinction between individuals just as much as any other inherent characteristic. The mark of the artist is the creative desire, the obsession to make something. What he makes will be, inevitably, the sum total of what he is. The dull, uninspired, unimaginative individual cannot create anything but what he is himself. The inspired, imaginative artist will constantly produce the best kind of result. No matter what rules or methods the former be taught he cannot overcome his inherent lack. Nor will any amount of rule or method increase the quality of the latter's work.

How, then, can design be taught? The answer lies, not in a method or formula, but in the proper guidance of the innate creative desire. The real purpose in teaching design should be two-fold. First, the teaching of keen, intelli-

gent observation and second, the application of the results of observation toward efforts of invention and originality. Observation can be taught by teaching a use for it. Let the student take notice of the obvious and subtle things about him; the beautiful effect of lichens on a stone wall; frost crystals on a window pane or the beauty of a bud just before it bursts into leaf in spring, observe the freedom of natural growth, its sturdiness, strength and beauty; and the relationships of one part to another. In the small pin feathers of a bird's wing and the scales of a fish can be seen a similar order of design—yet how different the general feeling; one soft and feathery, the other hard, cold and transparent with its reflections of many beautiful colors.

Keen intelligent observation carries with it a sense of freedom, and invention, a sense of firmness of design. The student stands alone with his ideas and uses them as he pleases. Liberty and license are his in the building of his design or composition. He gives his reaction to the things he has observed without trace of set rule or formula, exaggerating, and manipulating color, line and form to meet his express purpose, his one restriction being this; that there be order, and that this order be made interesting.

With this in mind the study of design at the Art Academy of Cincinnati seeks to find the natural expression of the student. What can he do best, and how best can the Academy help him? The aim is to prove a student to himself, to give him confidence. Observation is knowledge, and knowledge is confidence. Confidence minus experiment and invention. No effort is made to bolster weak character nor to hinder strong talent with petty rules of thumb.



Above--A wall decoration for a bath-room. Right--A design for textile

Drawing, color, use of materials—the mechanics of art are rigidly taught and insisted upon. Workmanship can be taught. When the student finds his natural field he will have the necessary tools to work with and do what he wants.

Perhaps a short resumé of the first year's work will be of interest. At the beginning of the year a very simple theory of color is taught, based upon the spectrum and range of values from black to white. The color harmonies of nature are studied, the possibilities of scientific harmonies experimented with, studying the absolute rules of procedure, to show the beginner the absolute necessity of order, of thought and plan necessary to every color harmony.

The individual experiments with his own inherent taste in color. What does he like and how can he order it. He creates color harmonies in simple spots, carefully judging the proportion of one color to another, of value to value—until finally he reacts to color, not simply emotionally but reasonably. He can say of any given color arrangement, not that it is bright, cheerful or dull—the things that the uninformed say—but that it is well planned, and why, and how it was achieved. This knowledge is applied directly in creative work. As has been said before nature is observed, together with fine examples by fine artists. Those elements necessary to well planned design are considered. The value of repetition, rhythm, balance, proportion, gradation and variety are discussed and analyzed. Briefly, the road is opened over which the individual must travel; he is not placed in a softly cushioned litter and carried over it.

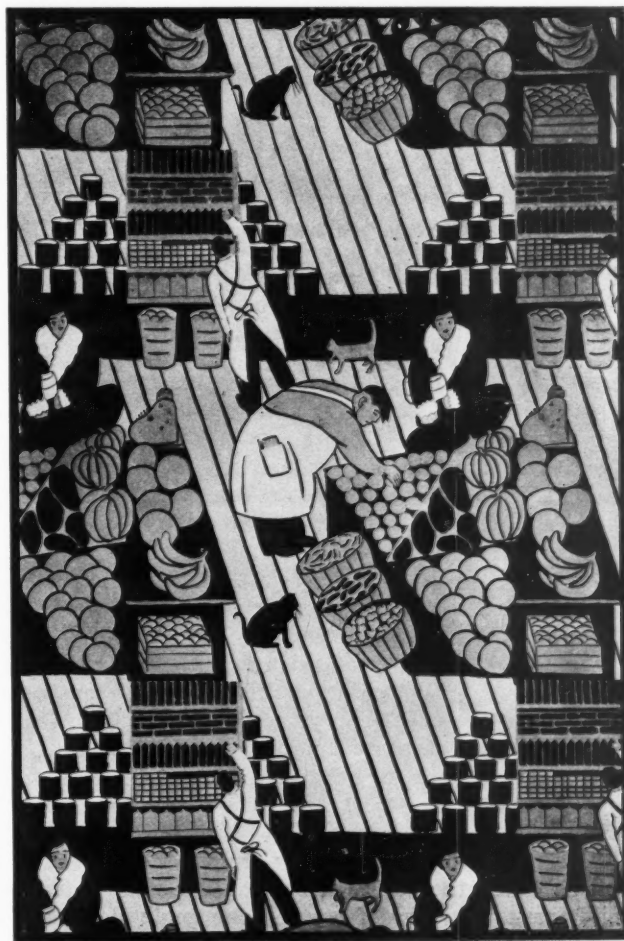
In a large class there cannot be too great a variety new articles for daily life but to re-design the old ones.

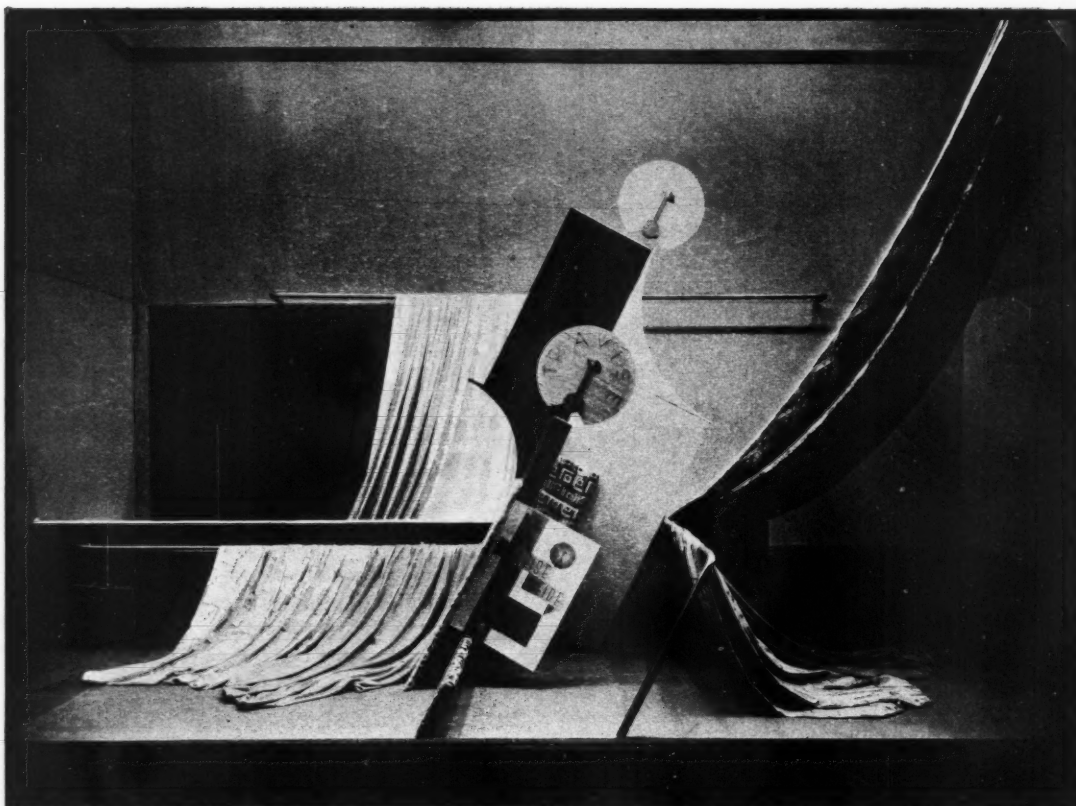
in the problems undertaken by each student. Therefore a problem is assigned. A wallpaper, textile or any other practical effort. The source of design and the method and purpose are left to the student. He considers the possibilities of unusual sources, such as: the street, the hotel lobby, the jungle, the grocery store, the pet shop, etc. Incidents and objects and plans of his own observation are considered and experimented with. He finds there are no restrictions, no limits to what he can do, except the restriction before mentioned, the one of order and interest.

The accompanying illustrations show a few of these efforts. The Grocery Store design shows what possibilities lie in a very simple subject. Yet what an unusual and rich source for the designer. The variety of shape, line, form and pattern. The many kinds of fruit and vegetables, rows of cans and bottles, the cat, the clerk, the customer. What a never ending array of repetitions and gradations can be found there. What a chance to choose and pick.

As the work of the first year course is general and all students must take it the first year, it is intended to help the student find himself, and the work is not specialized. It is planned to start the student in either pictorial or decorative design. If he can be made to think as an individual being, can be made to see that his dreams and desires are sacred and possible to himself this alone is an achievement worth many times the price of his yearly tuition.

Today we have need for more good designers than at any other time in the world's history, not merely to design





■ ■ ■
Window display
from the Reimann
School of Berlin

MODERN DISPLAY OF MERCHANDISE

BY BLANCHE NAYLOR

Artists are taking a new interest in window display and a new life is given the manner in which merchandise is presented. It opens a live field of activity for the young designer interested in art in relation to industry

■ Fabrics, frocks and costume accessories are today following the dictates of special designers, as always, but with the difference that they are now taking advantage of the added cachet imparted by modern settings, created by clever designers in another field. Architectural effects of restrained dignity are created from inexpensive materials and all the inanimate objects are given life and movement by unique arrangements of setting. In the illustrations this is best shown by the rising circular or spiral construction which gives the definite impression of a luxurious marble staircase, an atmosphere appropriate to the surroundings in which the products shown will eventually be exhibited. How much more logical and sales-compelling, to show various accessories as they will be in use.

Design for the show window and the store front might well be called the "three dimensional design" since these units are not surveyed from any one angle alone, but are seen rather from vantage points. The various elements

which are to be combined in the most effective manner are sometimes few and often many. A group of small objects may be the merchandise to be shown, upon another display the focal point may be centered upon a few larger pieces.

Modern show window decoration is departing from the three-dimension view in some instances and are creating a flat background by the use of screens placed toward the forefront, thus decreasing the stage depth. Lighting, in contrasts of shadow and brilliance, is used as a distinct part of the whole design. Abstract form plays a prominent part in certain types of display, and often intensifies the merchandise shown against such a background.

Formal and ornamental fixtures were in the past mere utilitarian devices, and the suitability of each for the display in which it was to be used, was seldom considered. Those of today are created especially to harmonize with the new modes and they are to be found in increasing numbers of good form and finish. The more extreme type of show window design is not only permissible but desirable, since they are changed and varied frequently,—usually in a metropolis at least twice a week, and in smaller towns at slightly longer intervals. To emphasize the merchandise, calling attention to it, keeping the background subservient but magnetic and in the proper spirit, to express subtly the thought of the "dernier cri" not alone for itself but primarily for the enhancement of the merchandise,—is the aim of successful modern show window designers. Yet it is sometimes necessary, while maintaining the individuality



A free brush all-over design in one color in which a pleasing rhythm is obtained by variation in line movement



Rich effects may be obtained by a series of free brush motifs which change in size and color and rhythm



A free brush design using the direct
bird motifs of the American Indian
with a richly vibrating line effect



These four all-over designs done with free brush strokes were made by students at Ohio State University

of certain windows, to keep them in spirit equally appropriate for the exhibition of various other types of similar or related sales products.

Varying textures, are now used in an extremely attractive fashion, notably in the display shown, making use of skillfully placed rectangles. The actual color is all of one fairly neutral tone, with black for contrast, and striking juxtapositions are created by the careful spacing of shadows, formed by the depth of the "frames" in which the merchandise is shown. The corrugated surface of one portion of the screen adds another note of interest to the composition. Not so long ago the restraint of this display would have been considered too great,—it is the adaption of architectural principles in every field to which the present highly delightful development of fine display design is largely due. The masses recognize one essential rule,—simplicity is desirable; and with that basic fact to work from, innumerable charming, worthy settings are built up.

In an example of some of the best modern expositions of specific types of merchandise, in this case two fabrics, the textiles are incorporated as a part of the design to show them well. The circular trademark is utilized as a focal point, and the curves flowing upward repeat this motif.

In the past the architectural effect of the shop front to a great extent affected and changed the final appearance of the display within, often lending an entirely incongruous air to the showing, but with the coming of modern design

trends to architecture the shop front itself has been transformed into a severe and chaste stage space devoted primarily to the proper exhibition of the goods within.

The first essential need in considering the problem of show window display is that of all commercial exposition,—to attract the passing public and to create an artistic, complete and effective entity in the exhibit. "It is as necessary for a shop window to be filled with action as it is for a street car to go" says a well-known authority on merchandise display. Implied though it usually must be, the feeling of motion must be obvious, since by this, more than any other method, is the desire to buy most easily aroused. To achieve this end in the modern manner, it is essential that the predominant principles of craftsmanship, style and architecture be considered.

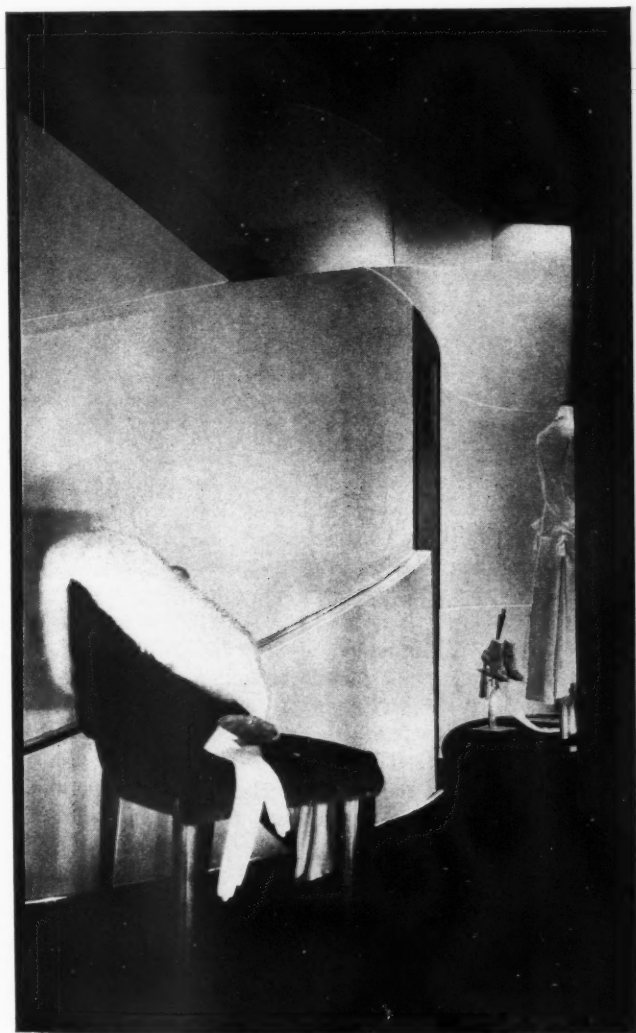
The shop window naturally shows various kinds of products, but it should not attempt to show too many at one time,—and these should be related in design, form, color or element, to create a unified display. The approach to each problem in the display of merchandise is dictated by the type of material to be shown; but it is possible to work out a dynamic fixture or general design with which innumerable types of merchandise may be shown at different times. This has been done notably in a prominent Manhattan store where tiered, screened, and columned arrangements form a background for the changing displays.

New materials naturally lend themselves to the new art of display, and such things as leather, aluminum and similar metals, glass, both opaque and transparent, appears in combination with a vast variety of fabrics and odd textiles. The use of geometric masses and lines has increased notably in recent designs for merchandise display, since by such a background the eye is attracted and immediately travels to the goods in the showing. Striking arrangements of textiles, costume accessories, interior decorations, small household articles,—may be fixed in formal or informal pattern effects upon such a background. The goods shown should be used as the central motif in the new school of display, whenever possible, a better method is to incorporate the product shown as a definite part of the design itself.

In the effective linking and contrasting of form, space, and color, the skill of the modern display designer is shown. There should naturally be a focal point of the design from which the eye of the observer travels to other points of the showing. Cohesion and coherence of message is almost impossible to achieve without such a central feature. The shop window is unique in advertising display in that it actually shows the products advertised. The space a printed display is comparatively abstract in that it cannot possibly show the three dimensional effect of the object itself.

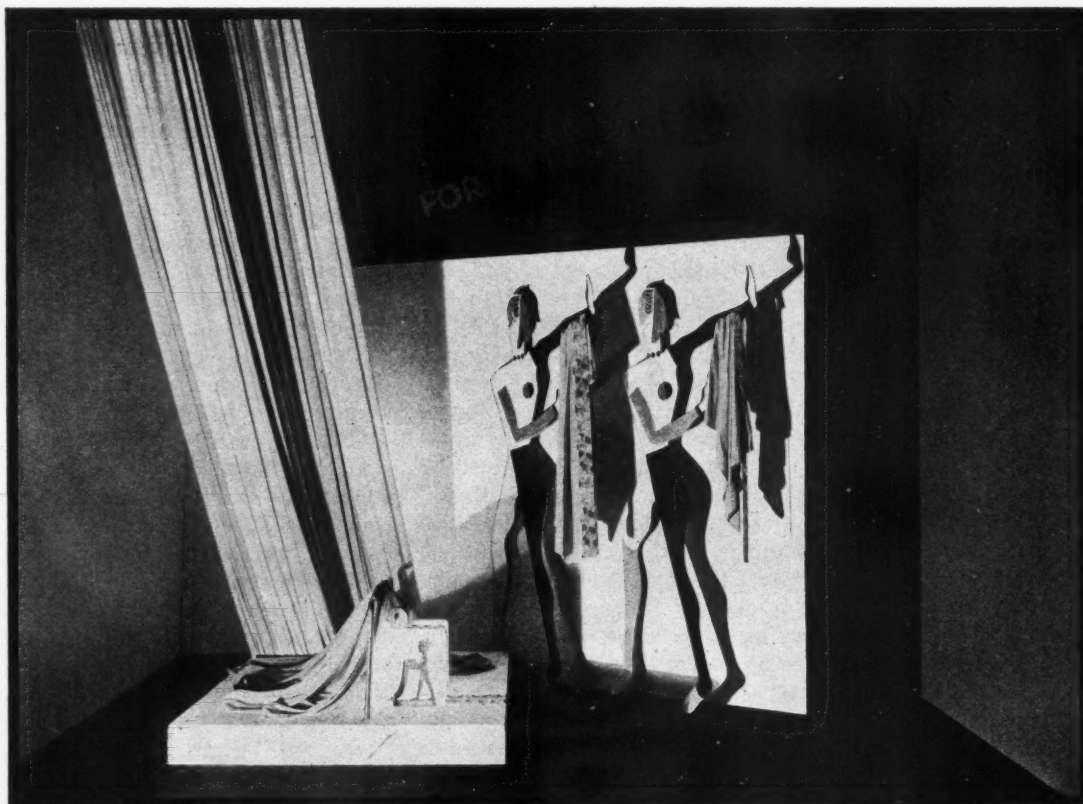
Frequent educational expositions are used in varying arrangements and these usually give a practical view of the manner in which the products are manufactured. These displays are scarcely to be considered from the point of design arrangement, however, although certain types do follow the same principles.

Contemporary trends are nowhere found in greater prominence than in the field of commercial art. It is a



A subtle suggestion of how wearing apparel may look in a setting similar to that in which it may later appear

ABSTRACT FIGURES



Amusing figures of this type do attract and give a dynamic feel to the whole which is pleasing to the modern eye in line and movement

work which has always given itself to experiment and the results obtained in many recent showings prove the success of the new methods in design as applied to the promotion of fine merchandise.

Frederick Kiesler, a recognized authority on the subject, stresses the fact that "Organized media are the tools for giving art its meaning." This statement when made in a discussion of show window display emphasizes the importance of avoiding haphazard effects. Thrown together, objects mean nothing, whether they are seen in painting, sculpture, architecture, or heard in music. Carefully arranged according to a definite plan, the same objects come to have a deep and complete appearance, essential for the purposes of display. Mr. Kiesler, by whose courtesy the accompanying photographs are shown, declares that all display of this type should convey an atmosphere of "tension".

Shaded modeled effects and flat surface designs in contrast give this tremendously dynamic finish. By such methods there are available an infinite variety of possible varied arrangements of three dimensional objects against flat backgrounds. Simplicity remains also the important note to be followed in restrained and careful fashion. Much stronger effects are produced not only by simple forms but by simple colors also, strikingly contrasted.

Mr. Kiesler states that he believes "Efficiency raised to higher degree" to be the best definition of the chief standard of modern work of this sort. With the entire removal of all unnecessary adornment the true beauty of the objects shown emerges. His creed, and that of his fellow workers, is "To use only the basic media in any sphere of art". The architect must limit himself to the fewest materials, and in using these he must follow the most natural, simple plan. The painter is to use only few colors and these with tremendous restraint. Applied to show window and similar commercial display, the same tenets dictate the abolition of all useless and superfluous embellishment.

To utilize each material exactly as it is, and to emphasize thus the beauty of its own character, is the rule of this modern school. If one works in marble, the hardness and cold color of the stone must be stressed, in metal the clean, rhythmic lines to the stuff must be brought out in the design, and so on through all possible media.

With these primary rules followed, and with full play allowed, the experimental and inventive faculties of the designer; the potentialities of this modern commercial art development are immense, and the field of merchandise display is developing steadily as one to which the competent designer is glad to devote his talents and helpful suggestions.



PLAY- MATES

The playful figures made by the young Viennese designer, Vally Wieselthier, was recently used as a new note in window display in New York City as a keynote for the new type of mannikins which she has made for commercial display. The outstanding quality of this artist's work is her understanding of materials and their possibilities in expressing a joyous play spirit



These two modern trade marks are the work of the Schule Reimann of Berlin and appear in the publication "Farbe und Form"

CRETONNES

These very smart new designs were made by Miss Jennie Green and manufactured by Cyrus Clark for F. Schumacher, Inc., of New York City



Miss Greene is the teacher of textile design at the New York Evening School of Industrial Arts and the School Art League classes. She uses the methods developed by Miss Henriette Reiss whose work appeared in two previous numbers of DESIGN





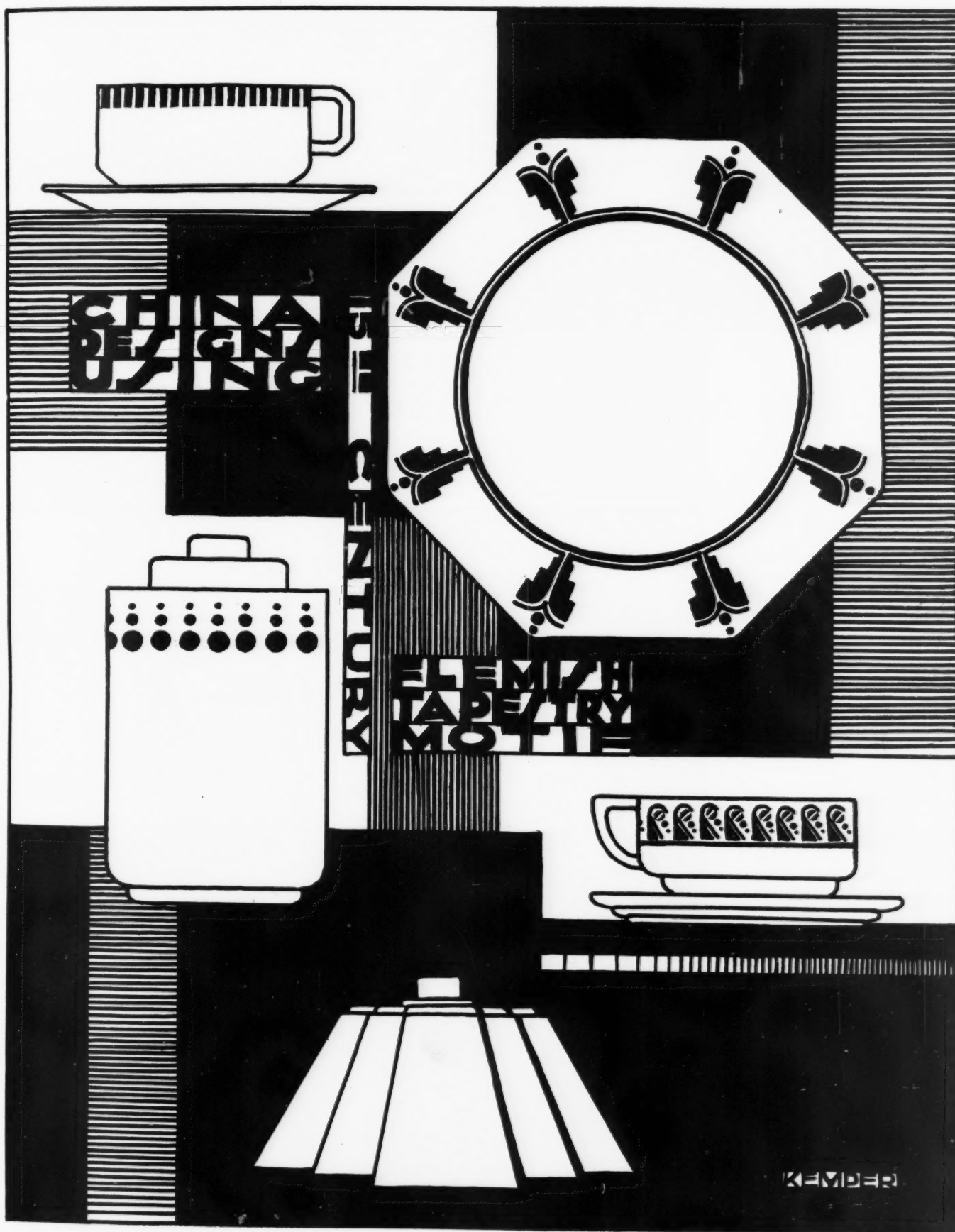
This textile designed by Henriette Reiss was manufactured on raw silk by Frank Latz and in this pattern one can see the emphasis placed on the general line of petal growth



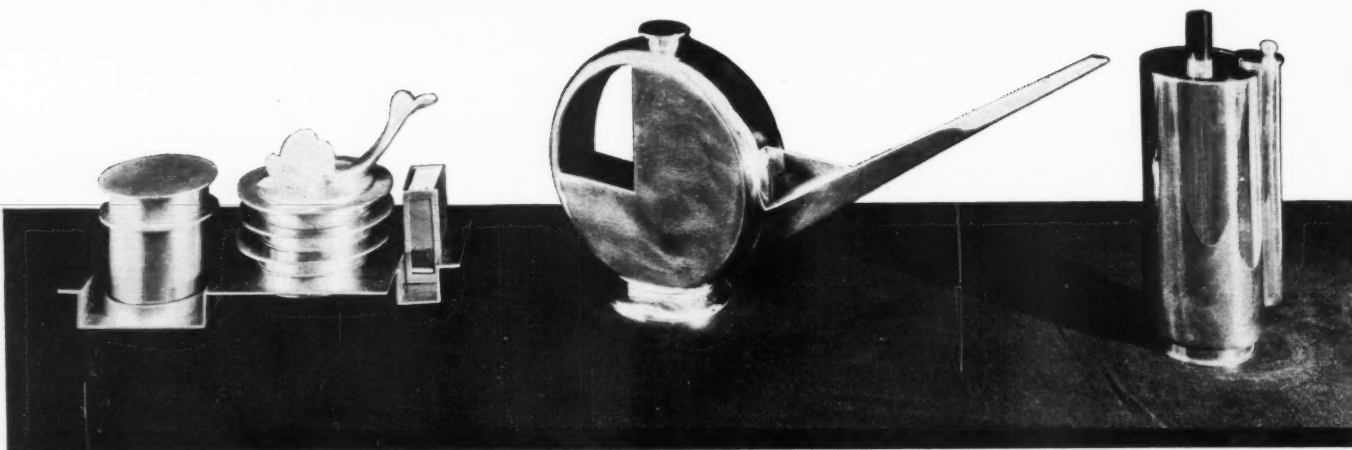
In this cretonne Miss Reiss has placed the emphasis on the gradation of color growth. It was used in the trade by F. Schumacher, Inc.



Portion of Tapestry from the South Kensington Museum woven in colored worsteds Flemish weaving 15th Century

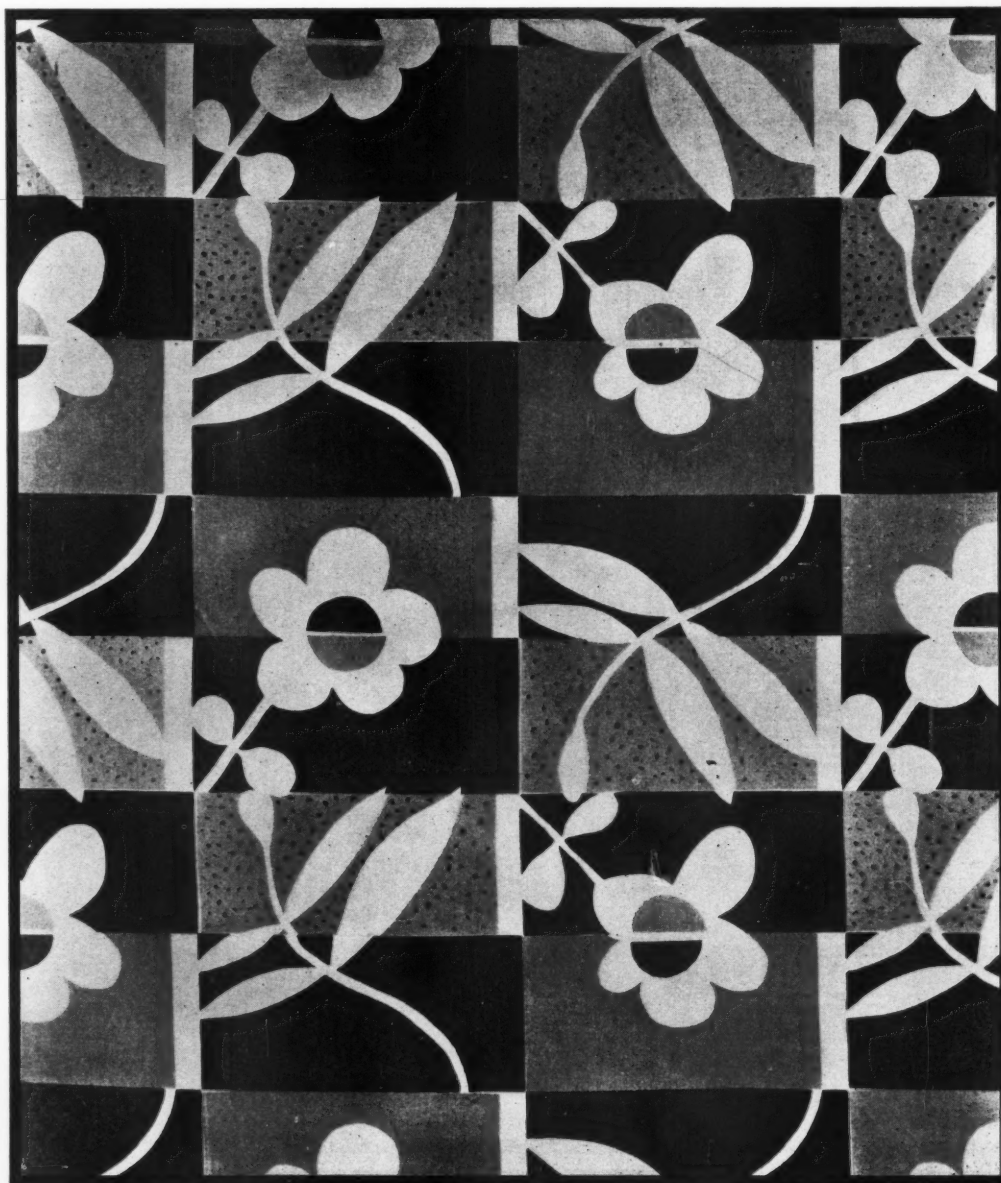


A page of suggestions for ceramic shapes and decorative features by John Kemper, showing a variety of different interpretations

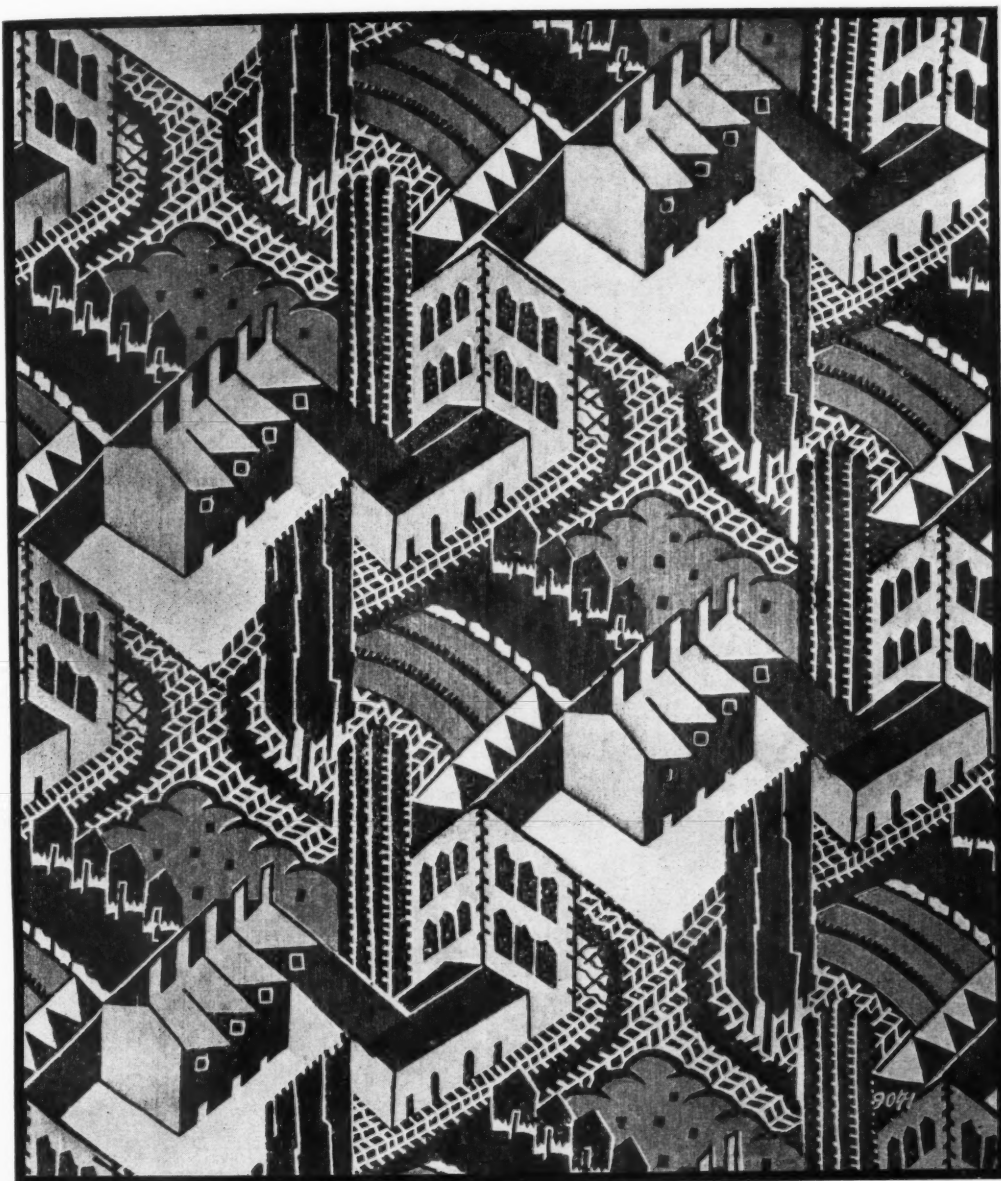


MODERN METAL AND TEXTILE ART

Courtesy American Federation of Arts



An interesting new cretonne designed by Prof. Ernest Scherz from Germany recently shown at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

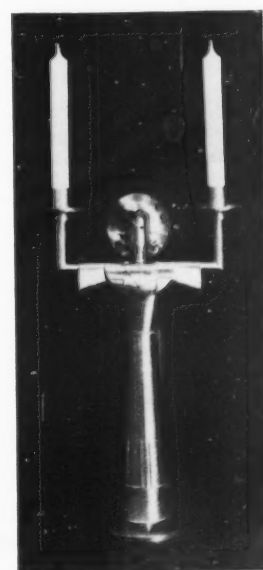


FACTORY MOTIF
IN TEXTILE

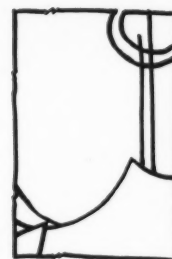
Courtesy Metropolitan Museum

There is a new quality to the designs for textiles which have been appearing everywhere was shown in the recent International Exhibition held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. A smart new type of rhythm, quick, sharp and highly accented is a dominant characteristic. Metals too echo this same feel of this age as is shown in the candlestick on this page and the modern grouping on the opposite page both from Reimann School

A
CANDLESTICK



FOR JUNE



These comic compositions are unusually well made by Fred Fisher of Dearborn High School of Dearborn, Mich. and show a fine understanding of design in its application to this type of art. The composition study at upper right gives beginners an insight into the meaning of space division

CARICATURES

BY FRED FISHER



Good design may manifest itself at times in a humorous vein as is seen in these pen and ink drawings made by a high school student and in a manner well suited to newspaper reproduction. In this composition the bold relationship of oblique intersecting lines and the careful use of black masses has produced a startling effect.

MODERN ART
Continued from Page 31

our country today. But this year's printed silks, the newest fixtures of stainless metals and sanded glass can be just as authentically art as the old handicrafts were. They may lack the personal charm that individual workmanship can give but the precision of the machine makes them more appropriate to our day, more useful than ever before, and available to everyone. Their beauty is beauty in use, the unpretentious functional beauty of modern design—clean, swift, and precise.

The general term "decorative arts" is often applied to the useful arts of design, but it is contrary to the meaning of modern art. Design is not decoration, something added to a form. It is structure, the form itself. The forms of modern art grow directly out of materials and processes, conditioned, as always, by use. The ornamental idea of design has more relation to archaeology than to present day use. With materials so varied and rich in texture and color as they are now, why smother them with ornament? With processes disciplined by the machine to greater accuracy and speed, why imitate the irregularities of handwork? Why attempt the arabesque when smooth surfaces can be more easily cleaned? Too often ornament conceals defective work and the poor quality of materials; the intrinsic beauty of fine materials welcomes the revealing simplicity of straight edges and squared ends—the sharp definitions in machine work.

The principle of searching for beauty in the expression of materials and the appropriate means of working them into forms adapted to use is as old as art itself. There is proof of this in the primitive weaves of the Kentucky Indians who worked out fascinating patterns by different groupings of strands as they twisted and tied them into place to make the cloth they used. The impassive kings of Egypt have a beauty that endures through the beauty of stone, carved in a way that never lets one forget the material, as the statues of Fourth Century Athens sometimes do. The pottery of Rhages, so frequently mentioned now after the Persian Show in London, is famous because it is perhaps as fine an expression of the fragility of clay, the turning of form, the translucence of glaze and the very personal use of pottery, as any that has ever been made before or since. Modern art makes no break with the past in the principles that guide it, but its materials are new, its means of working them are new, the demands of utility upon it are new, hence the forms will be different.

But difference alone has no significance in modern art. That is only the by-product of a structural rather than decorative conception of form. There is no virtue in the new just because it is new. The angles and arcs, flat colors and polished surfaces of modern art seem unfamiliar and sometimes bizarre but they are not without meaning, for these are the things the machine does best. In a day when articles of use must be multiplied with economy and speed in order that all may have them, we cannot ignore the forms suited to the machine. These forms may be cold and impersonal but they are efficient and they can be beautiful too, with a sheer, gaunt sort of beauty that is full of strength and assurance if controlled by a sense of proportion, a sympathetic regard for materials, and a knowledge of what the machine can do.

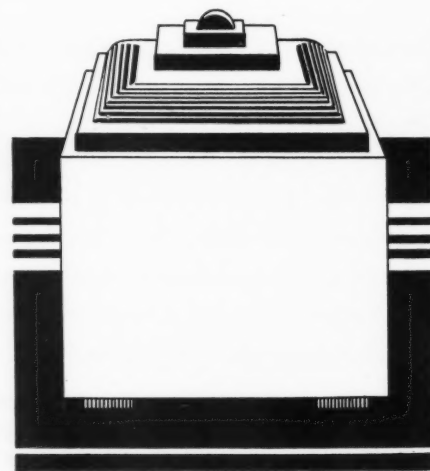
Modern art is a style in the making. It begins with simple forms in order to have them under control. Problems of structure take precedence over the choice of styles. The discipline of proportion in new materials and new processes

is harder to master than a vocabulary of ornament. There is little decoration in contemporary art aside from that inherent in the materials and brought out in the construction. Embellishment will come in time. It is an intellectual, somewhat self-conscious, art today, but proceeding along inevitable lines towards an eventual richness and exuberance of form as the qualities of new materials and the possibilities of new processes become more fully realized.

Let no one think that the soulless machine has crushed the living spirit of art. It is the most flexible instrument ever put into the hands of the creative artist. He is master of it. The quality of its product is wholly dependent on him. His work requires the highest order of creative insight and craftsmanship for there is much at stake. When designs are to be multiplied a thousand-fold they must be thought out very carefully in advance. Hence the modern artist, designing for the machine, sticks to basic principles, makes sure of his material, pays close attention to processes, is guided by the logic of use. Nor is he without the satisfaction and joy in his work that comes to the creative artist in a more personal field of expression like painting, where every canvas can be unique and complete in itself. For there comes a dramatic moment when the designer visualizes his idea in use, giving pleasure to thousands; made available to them by the dependable repetitions of the machine.

A recent visitor here spoke of the Parthenon as "a symbol of beauty forever enshrined in the temple of the mind". And well it might be, for not one in twenty of those who set it up as a measure of beauty has ever seen it, or even good photographs of it. But modern art is here before our eyes. It is contemporary. It will always be with us. We may as well learn to enjoy it even though it requires more of us in the way of an active mental approach than most of the traditional forms. In them we are guided by the preferences of time. In the art of today we have only our own sense of proportion; our conception of relative values, to guide us. We know that a contemporary art can be terribly revealing. Perhaps no other manifestation of a people tells so much of their taste, or measures the quality of their culture so surely. It behooves us then to know this art of our own day. It belongs to us. We cannot escape it, nor in some degree, the responsibility for it, for standards in these matters are about what we make them. In condemning "this terrible modern art" we only indict ourselves.

Modern design
for a box as is
described on
pages 32 and
33 of this issue



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